The English Language Curriculum Prescribed at the Primary Schools in Yemen: A Critical Study

Synopsis

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- **Introduction**

English is an international language that people all over the world try to learn for different purposes. It is a language that dominated the world and accordingly became an essential tool of communication. It is the language of technology, education and mostly every field of life in the world. It became a global language resulting in various curricula designed in different parts of the world to suit the learners' needs and to fulfill their purpose of learning and studying English.

Arabic countries are part of the world where English has been an important language since ancient time. It is an old period since English started to be introduced and used in Arabic countries .This period started with the British invasion to different countries such as Egypt, Palestine and Yemen. British people ruled these countries and introduced their language and culture. A great attention was paid to introduce English language .Accordingly , many institutes were established and many curricula were designed to fulfill the needs of teaching English in the colonialism period. Since that period , English has been occupying a significance role in different aspects of life. It is the language of education in Arabic countries. All the scientific subjects are taught in English. It is the second language in all the Arabic countries. This reflects the fact that a special attention is being made for the process of teaching and learning English .A great deal of such attention were given to curriculum design and development.

Correspondingly, Yemen is not an exception to such countries. English in Yemen, especially in the southern part of the country started to be taught and used with the commencement of the British invasions of Yemen that started in 1839. During the period of the British colonialism lasted for more than 130 years, English was a major language. It was used as a medium of communication between British colonialist and Yemeni people. So it was looked at by Yemeni people as a source of income. Those who study English could find jobs easily either as translators and interpreters or as English teachers. Different curricula were used to suit the purpose of teaching English at the period of colonialism. After the independence on 14 October 1963 , less importance was given to English. Then the modern technology and the developments in all aspects of life and other factors brought English again into a high position in Yemen along

with the rest of the world. This development required development in the curriculum of English .The curriculum was changed and a new copy appeared with the rise of Yemeni unification in 1990. It was designed by a British author and started to be used as a compulsory subject. Students in the government schools of Yemen study English only in the primary schools at the age of about twelve years old. Since, 1990, there has not been any update or modification in the curriculum.

The present research is an attempt to find out the teachers and students opinions who are related to the curriculum of the primary schools in Yemen .Teachers have a long experience with this curriculum, hence they can provide accurate data. Students also will be asked to write their opinion about the curriculum . In addition to that, a critical analysis will be made in order to evaluate the English curriculum in one of the most important stages of education in Yemen that is the primary level of learning.

- **The statement of the problem :**

A good curriculum is one of the most important tools to develop the skills of the students .It is the basic element of the teaching process. Thus, a special attention should be paid for curriculum design and update. In Yemen, Primary schools years are the stages where Yemeni students are taught English. The English curriculum must be a good one at this stage. It must be attractive, simple and reliable. In other words, it should be designed to suit the needs and age of the students. It should be revised and updated periodically. The present scenario is the opposite. The curriculum of the primary schools in Yemen has not been revised or evaluated since a long period. So there is a gap between the needs of the students and the curriculum. The result is that many of the students in the Yemeni schools look at it as a difficult subject and they are not interested in studying it .This leads to a student who is weak in English and it influences his/her future .

- **Aims and Objectives of the Study:**

The current research aims to find out the responses of the Yemeni teachers and students of primary schools about the English curriculum and to critically evaluate the curriculum. The objectives of the present study are:

1. To find out the English teachers responses and experiences about the primary schools curriculum.
2. To find out the opinion of the students at the primary schools in Yemen about the English curriculum.
3. To analyze and evaluate the curriculum on the biases of data collection.
4. To highlight the shortcomings and problems related to the curriculum.
5. To offer suggestions for the development and revision of the curriculum.

- **The Rational of the Study :**

English being the world language, teaching and learning English is always in discussion. The invent of modern technology and different methods of teaching are the factors contributing in the development and facilitates the process of teaching English. Accordingly, the curriculum is one of the most important elements in the process of teaching. It has to be evaluated and updated to suit the different goals of studying English in Yemen, however, the English curriculum taught at the primary schools of Yemen has not been updated since a long time. The primary stage introduces English .At this stage, students are usually of twelve years old. They start to study English at this age and stage.

The current study will focus on one of the most important stages that is the primary level of learning. A good curriculum can motivate students to learn English .The output of a good curriculum will be students who are able to deal with the curriculum in the rest of their academic life that is at secondary and university stages. In brief, there is a strong relationship between the curriculum and the learners. The present study is an attempt to investigate the Yemeni curriculum that has not been revised or updated since its publication at 1990 up to date. The current study will contribute to investigate and analyze the English curriculum in one of the essential stages of Yemeni governmental education. It will also provide a direction for modification and revision through the suggestions.

The recommendations based on this research can provide guidelines to develop the English curriculum of the primary stage. It is also anticipated that teachers and students will get benefit of this research.

- **The Hypothesis of the Study**:

1. Teachers and students of the primary schools in Yemen have negative point of view about the content and design of the curriculum.

2. The present English curriculum in Yemen lacks many elements including the cultural and social aspects.

3. The curriculum lacks the activities and the supporting devices such as videos and other materials.

4. There is a gap between the curriculum and the student's needs in Yemen.

5. The curriculum is not suitable for the age of the students.

- **Research Methodology:**

The present study uses the survey method to collect primary data , the data will be collected through the use of two questionnaires :.one for the teachers and the other for the students. The research design is one of the explorative and interpretive models based on data analysis. It is the analysis of primary school curriculum at Yemen schools Yemen. The researcher will use the random sampling method to collect the data from the primary schools of Hajjah Yemeni city. Data will be collected through questionnaires so it will be analyzed through the statistical techniques. The software programs such as S.PSS and the MS..excel will be used to analyze the data. The descriptive analysis will be also used to analyze the content of the curriculum.

- **Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to analyze the curriculum of the primary schools and find out the opinions of the teachers and students about it. The research will confine itself to the English teachers at Hajjah city primary schools, and the students of the primary schools namely first, second and third stage of primary schools at Hajjah city .

The present research analyzes the three books of the primary school (the period books).The secondary level school curriculum and other primary school curricula apart from Hajjah city is excluded from this research

Tentative Chapterization:

The current study consists of six chapters

Chapter one:

It will be titled "Introduction" It is the proposal of the study .It consists of an introduction of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the rational of the study, hypothesis, the questions of the study the methodology, the scope of the study and the tentative chapterization .

Chapter Two :

It will be titled "Literature Review ".It consists of theoretical study and literature review of the study.

Chapter Three :

It will be titled "Analysis of the Curriculum " It is an analysis of the three books period books that are taught in the primary schools.

Chapter Four:

It will be titled "Research Methodology ." It is the research methodology. It will contain the way of collecting data and the tools for collecting data. The samples also will be part of this chapter.

Chapter Five :

It will be titled "Data Analysis" "It is the chapter of data analysis. It will provide the statistical data collected through questionnaires.

Chapter Six :

It will be titled "Conclusion and Recommendations" ". It highlights the Conclusions, findings and recommendations of the research.

This proposal is tentative and subjected to any later modifications recommended by the Supervisor.

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Researcher Research Guide

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